

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 22, 2010**

PRESENT: President Philip Glotzbach, Chair; Hugh Foley, Vice Chair; Rochelle Calhoun, Michael Casey, Winston Grady-Willis, Ann Henderson, Susan Kress, Mark Huibregtse, Bob Turner, Jeff Segrave, Justin Sipher, Michael West, Alexandra Stark, Jonathan Zeidan, Adrienne Zuerner, Anne Petruzzelli, Gail Cummings-Danson, Denise Smith and Barbara Krause (Secretary).

ABSENT: Mary Lou Bates, Muriel Poston.

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the October 8, 2010 meeting were approved as distributed.

**2. Board of Trustees Update**

President Glotzbach reported on successful meetings the previous week with the Board of Trustees. Among the significant items considered were the following:

- The Board of Trustees approved the revision to the Scribner Village Replacement Project as previously endorsed by IPPC. The Board also authorized the Vice President for Finance and Administration to begin preparatory work for a bond issue to support the project. President Glotzbach reminded IPPC that the estimated project cost is \$42 million to be funded as follows: \$20 million net from the bond issue; \$12 million from the Sussman family gift; \$5.5 million to be dedicated from a previous campaign commitment; and \$4.5 million to be covered, if needed, by fundraising, over enrollment funds, or other excess revenues.
- Campus Plan: President Glotzbach updated Trustees on multi-year campus facilities planning. The Board expressed its support for the prioritization reflected in those documents, which also had been endorsed earlier by IPPC.
- Science Vision: The Academic Affairs Subcommittee expressed its commendation and support for the Science Vision and encouraged the next steps toward implementation.
- Library / IT Co-location: The Academic Affairs Subcommittee expressed its commendation and support for a proposal to co-locate Information Technologies in the Library and encouraged the next steps toward implementation.

### **3. SGA Update**

SGA President Alexandra Stark '11 provided an update on the work of the Student Government Association. Highlights included the following:

- Fall elections resulted in 17 newly elected positions. Thirteen of those elected are first-year students, adding an important voice.
- 917 students (34% of the student body) voted in the elections. This excellent turnout was attributed to revised procedures that, among other things, limited voting to a single day.
- Programs that SGA is sponsoring this year include the following:
  - Responsible Citizenship Internship Awards.
  - Skidmore Urban Experience (SUE).
  - SGA sponsored fitness classes, which have been well attended.
  - Senior Class Project: To celebrate the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> graduating class of Skidmore, each class is doing a community service project in Saratoga Springs, with the objective of enhancing town-gown relationships.
  - Gender-neutral bathrooms: The Skidmore Pride Alliance is working with the Student Affairs Subcommittee of IPPC to consider increasing the number of gender-neutral bathrooms.
  - EMS/EMT Training Programs.
  - A cappella group performance opportunities in Zankel: SGA is working with Zankel administrators on behalf of a cappella groups who hope to practice and perform in the Helen Filene Ladd Music Hall in Zankel.
  - Promoting voter turnout in the upcoming national elections.
  - Internal organization: SGA is working to enhance its systems and operating codes to promote greater efficiency given the annual turn-over of SGA leadership.

President Glotzbach expressed his appreciation for the vigil organized last week by the Christian Fellowship and co-sponsored by the Pride Alliance, the Office of Religious Life, and the Office of Student Diversity Programs.

IPPC members expressed their appreciation and support for the work being led by the SGA Executive Committee.

### **4. "Optimization Part 3"**

President Glotzbach referred members to the "Positioning Skidmore for the Future" report issued on 28 April 2006, which was distributed with the meeting materials. He provided a brief summary of past optimization conversations and indicated that the College would now return to answer the remaining question from that earlier study – namely, what is the optimal size of the Skidmore student body? He noted that student body size is arguably the single most important strategic parameter for the College's planning purposes. The purpose of today's conversation is to consider how to frame the questions for the Optimization study, how to identify what information is needed to answer those questions, and initial thoughts about the process. President

Glotzbach suggested that we are currently feeling the pinch of the larger student enrollment on campus this fall, but he emphasized that he has no preconceived notion of the “right answer” to the optimization question.

Comments and questions from IPPC members included the following:

- The process is important. We must consider what information is required so that the community can be well informed about the strategic context and impact of this decision.
- How much revenue does the College need each year to provide the educational experience we desire for our students? If we enrolled our targeted entering class each year, would we have sufficient money to fund that experience, or do our aspirations require more revenue (and, therefore, more students)?
- In three years, when the Scribner Village replacement is complete, what will be our residential capacity, and is that capacity consistent with our budgeted enrollment number?
  - Is our currently stated goal of being 90% residential still an appropriate goal?
  - How do we calculate our current residential capacity, taking into account that in recent years, significant space has been altered to address overcrowding?
- How has the College used over enrollment funds in recent years? Have those funds, derived from a larger student population, allowed the College to get better? In other words, although the College has been disciplined about keeping over enrollment revenue “below the line,” how essential is over enrollment revenue to the College’s delivery of our educational program within our established operating and capital budgets?
- What is the capacity of our residence halls and dining hall? Do those numbers suggest an upper boundary for the student body size?
- In doing this work, it will be important to be as precise as possible about various trade-offs – in other words, what programs the College can fund and what programs we would have to forgo at various enrollment levels.
- What student body size is required in order to provide the type of educational program we want to deliver? As we consider changing pedagogies, including high-impact experiences (internships, collaborative research, etc.), what size student body do we need? What size faculty is required to support the educational program? Are there changes to the expected faculty workload that must be made in order to support the desired educational experience?
- We must look not only at the total number of students, but the distribution of students across majors and programs, and at the number of faculty within those departments and programs.

- It is important to look not only at the overall student-faculty ratio, but at the number of faculty required to support student academic interests in various departments and programs.
- Optimization should not be just a financial metric. It also is important to consider the overall educational experience of our students, including the support services needed to deliver that experience.
- It was noted that Optimization is a series of compromises. We will need to balance our desired academic and co-curricular programs, financial aid, etc., to ensure that we are providing a valued educational experience for students.
- Stated another way, there will be multiple answers to all of the questions we ask. Some decisions may depend on how quickly we need to reach a desired goal. As the student body size has increased, the stressors are not always where one might expect. For example, as classes get stronger academically, the demand for support from academic services *increases*. Some of those stressors will be quantifiable, and some will be more qualitative.
- How will we take into account new educational experiences that we cannot yet anticipate? What will be our future general education requirements? What new educational experiences will our students need that will affect this conversation?
- How does our desired male to female ratio in the student body affect this conversation?
- To what extent does the Optimization question frame and/or inform CTM 2.0?
- To what extent will data from peer and aspirant institutions drive the conversations, or is this a Skidmore-focused conversation?
- We have made significant progress on student diversity numbers, but our progress is lagging on faculty and staff diversity. It will be important to note that faculty and staff diversity does affect the student experience, and we may need to have some difficult discussions in this regard.
- The student IPPC members suggested that many students choose Skidmore because it is small enough to know most students – but not all. The student IPPC members do currently experience Skidmore as a small school, but they are feeling the effects of current crowding.

The discussion then turned to process and a possible timeframe. Comments and questions included the following:

- President Glotzbach noted that the Optimization conversation should be framed in such a way that answers can be developed, within the context of the current *Strategic Plan*, by the end of the 2011-12 academic year (i.e., allowing budgetary implementation for FY

'13). It is his expectation that the group will make a recommendation to IPPC, which will then be considered, in turn, by the Cabinet, the President, and the Board of Trustees.

- There was some conversation about whether IPPC could work more quickly to frame the questions and begin work during the spring of 2011, thus allowing recommendations to be made to the Board of Trustees in February 2012. Others suggested that the work could be controversial, so that framing and the process are very important and worthy of the additional time.
- An important part of this work will be to communicate well within the campus community.
- It was suggested that it will be important to decide the basic framework for the conversation. Trying to imagine Skidmore five years from now is a different project than asking whether we could continue to live with enrollment at the current level.
- One IPPC member asked about the role of the Board of Trustees in this process. President Glotzbach indicated that the Board's Strategic Planning Committee has expressed a desire to be involved in these conversations, and he believes that we should strongly consider including a Trustee member in the Optimization working group. In the end, the Board will need to be more fully involved in the discussion and will need to approve this major planning parameter.
- It was noted that we currently have a transition with the appointment of a new Director of Institutional Research. The new Director will have an important role in this work.

President Glotzbach suggested that IPPC should decide what process and timeline are most appropriate, taking into account that the decision does affect the College's operating budget and the admissions targets that are defined each year.

President Glotzbach closed by expressing his confidence in and support of Susan Kress, who will serve as Acting President during his upcoming sabbatical. She will lead this work, including the discussions about process and timeline, in his absence.

## **5. Other**

Vice Chair Hugh Foley expressed appreciation to President Glotzbach for his leadership and wished him well on his sabbatical. IPPC members expressed their support for these sentiments with a warm round of applause.

*Minutes prepared by Barbara Krause. Please notify of any changes.*